



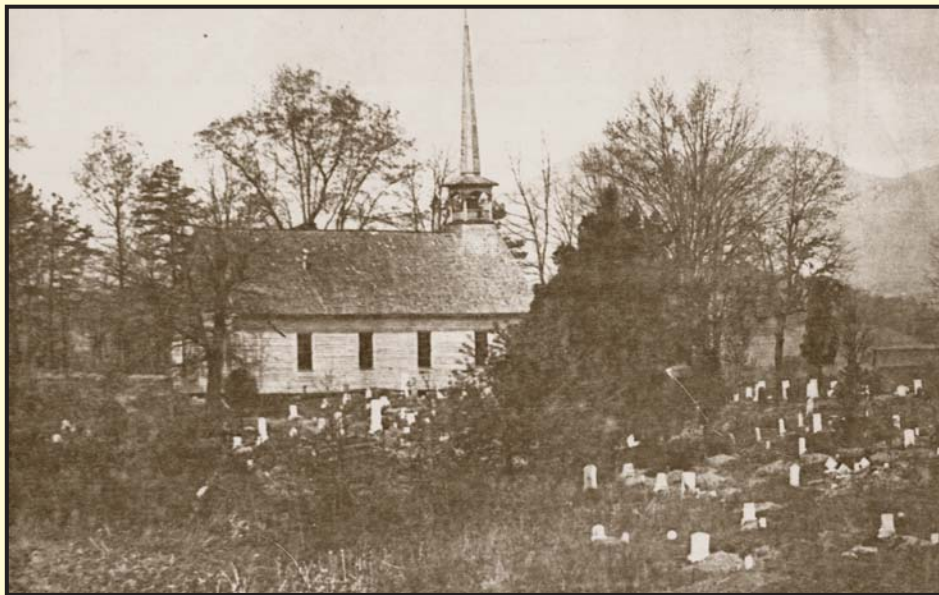
LOCUST FIELD CEMETERY



Confederate Rendezvous



The first Locust Old Fields Baptist Church was established here in 1803. It was among the first churches established west of Asheville. Although the original building no longer stands, it served the small community here for many years as a house of worship and a place of education. During the Civil War, it was a muster site for the local 112th Beaverdam Militia Regiment and a campground, according to local tradition.



The first Locust Old Fields Church served as an encampment and muster site during the Civil War.

Courtesy of the Canton Area Historical Museum

In September 1863, when Union forces captured Cumberland Gap, about three or four hundred 62nd North Carolina Infantry soldiers escaped. Many of these men were Haywood County natives and returned to their homes here. They joined other members of the regiment who were here on furlough and camped at Pigeon River, the name given to Canton before the small town was officially incorporated nearly thirty years later. Although few records exist of exactly where the soldiers camped, Locust Old Fields Church was likely the location.

The church and cemetery were again used as a Confederate encampment during the winter of 1864–1865, when Col. James Robert Love and six companies of Thomas's Legion camped at Locust Old Fields Church. They later took part in some of the last fighting of the war in Asheville and Waynesville in April and May 1865.

Today, as one of Haywood County's oldest cemeteries, Locust Field Cemetery serves as a reminder of the county's role in the Civil War. Dozens of Confederate veterans are interred here.



Col. James Robert Love, Thomas's Legion, and his men wintered at Locust Old Fields Church in 1864–1865 before fighting in some of the last battles of the Civil War.

*Courtesy North Carolina
Office of Archives and History*